

Volunteers' News Autumn 2025

The Office
Special
Edition



The Office: People, Place and Thanks

Valerie, Volunteer Co-ordinator/
News Editor



Hello Volunteers,

In this edition we take a moment to shine a light on our office and office-based volunteers.

In previous editions, we've celebrated our Befrienders and Carer Group Assistants. This time, we're highlighting the contributions of our office volunteers — Keeping in Touch Callers Dianne and Gail, and Advice Service Assistant Sharon — who help carers feel connected and supported.

Our office Admin Volunteers, Janet and Sue, kindly shared their stories with us in past editions of the newsletter.

Alongside our volunteer spotlight, this edition takes you on a colourful journey exploring the street art on the way to the

office, and looks back at life at Mabgate over the past nine months with a photo gallery.

You'll also meet Beth, our Head of Finance and Resources, discover our friendly neighbours at The Wren Bakery, and hear from Geoff Gibbs, IT & Facilities Coordinator, in From the Headrow to Mabgate: A Journey into the Fast Lane. We round things off with a look ahead to our Autumn/Winter events.

A huge thank to you, our volunteers for being part of our new office – whether popping in for a visit, joining events and meetings, or giving your time through volunteering. Your presence brings warmth and energy to the space.

Warmest wishes, Valerie ❤️

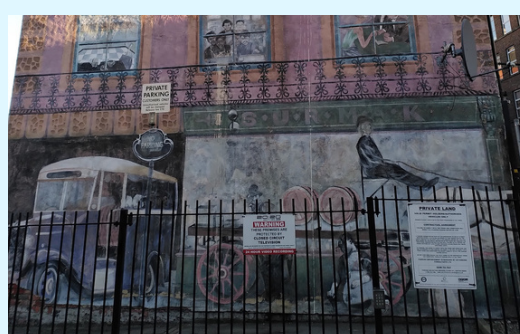
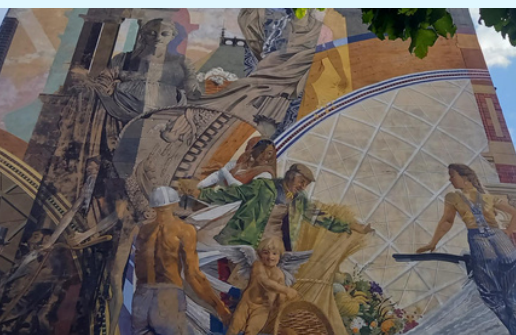
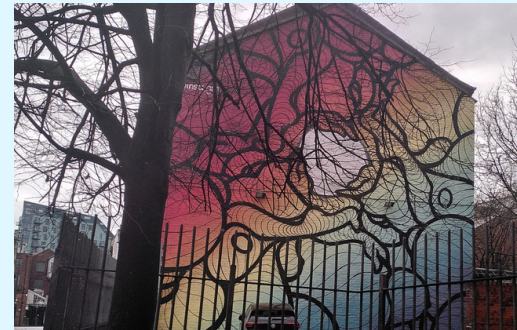
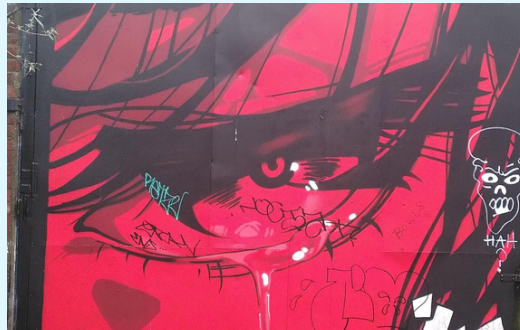


"Some people look for a beautiful place, others make a place beautiful."

-Hazrat Inayat Khan

A Colourful Journey

Take a look at some of the vibrant street art on the way to our office



Thank You
Dianne &
Gail

A Friendly Voice on the line: How Keeping In Touch Callers Make a Difference

by Valerie Banks, Volunteer Coordinator



Sometimes, it's the simplest things that make a difference like the sound of a friendly voice at the end of the phone. That's exactly what our Keeping In Touch Callers provide for unpaid carers across Leeds.

When a carer's support sessions with a Carer Support Worker come to an end, the journey doesn't stop there. Many carers still need reassurance, encouragement, or just someone to check in. That's where our volunteers step in—offering regular calls to make sure carers don't feel forgotten or left to cope alone.

Working from the Carers Leeds office, volunteers Dianne and Gail prepare by reading through notes on the database to understand the carer's circumstances. Then, when the call is made, the focus is firmly on the carer: How are things going? Is the care package working? Have benefits come through? Most importantly, how are they managing?

Some carers go days without talking to anyone other than the person they care for. A Keeping In Touch call breaks that silence, easing loneliness and offering reassurance. Crucially, it also means that if a caring situation worsens, Carers Leeds can step in quickly with extra support.

Volunteers carefully record each call and highlight any urgent issues including safeguarding concerns. They can also share details of Carers Leeds activities and groups, helping carers find opportunities to connect with others.

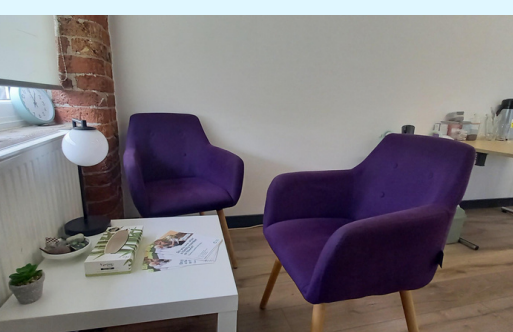
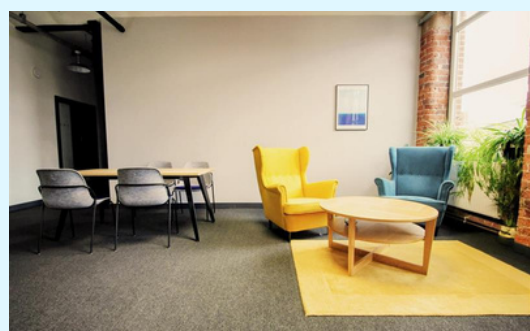
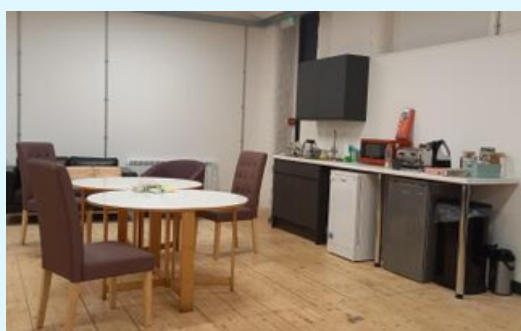
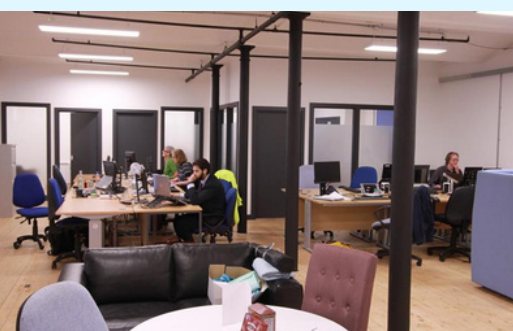
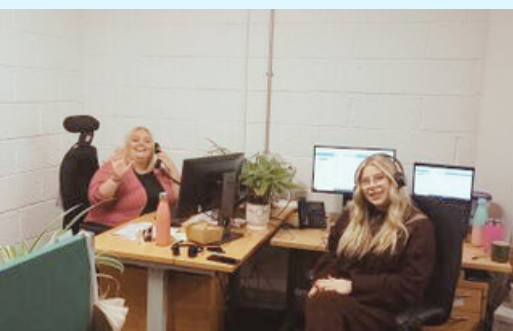
"It's fun, rewarding and caring, and I receive excellent support from office staff and my supervisor Kara." -Gail

"I really enjoy chatting with carers, sometimes being their only contact beyond daily caring responsibilities." -Dianne

It's more than a phone call. It's a bridge—keeping carers connected, supported, and reassured that someone is there for them.

Our Office, Inside and Out

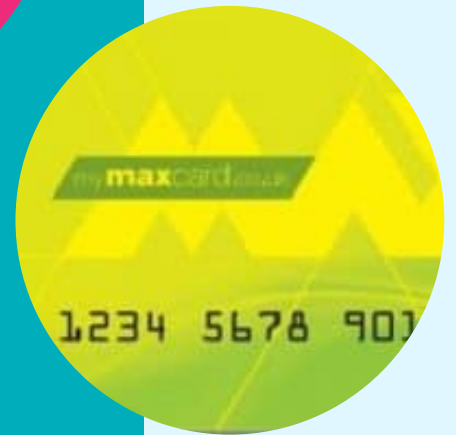
A glimpse of the space where we support carers and welcome our volunteers



Thank You
Sharon

Advice Line Volunteer: Supporting Carers Through Yellow Cards, and Max Cards

by April Lee, Advice Line Coordinator



Sharon volunteers on the Advice Line in the office and plays a key role in supporting carers through the Yellow and Max Cards.

Sharon is a valued member of the Advice and Support team, supporting us for over two years. She brings a smile and positive energy to our team each time she arrives. Drawing on her extensive experience from past employment, Sharon readily shares helpful suggestions.

Sharon manages the administration for the Yellow cards received from GP practices after carers complete them. This enables carers to be registered on GP records. We then contact carers as requested and share support information about how we can support each carer.

Sharon also supports the admin for the Max cards and makes sure they are sent to carers promptly.

Max cards are discount cards for persons under the age of 25 with an illness or disability, and are requested by the carer either by email or telephone.

The Max card gives carers and cared-for individuals discounted access to a variety of attractions and activities, helping them participate more affordably and create new, enjoyable memories together.

We are truly grateful for Sharon's commitment, positivity, and care. Her dedication behind the scenes ensures that carers and their families receive timely support and opportunities to create special memories. Thank you, Sharon, for the difference you make every day.

Sharon's 2025 Impact so far

➔ 314 Max Cards

➔ 67 Yellow Cards

LIFE AT MABGATE

It's been a busy time since moving into our new home at Mabgate. Here's a look back at life at Carers Leeds over the past nine months.

JAN

We started to settle into our brand-new home at Mabgate Mill 6 and to welcome office volunteers back.

FEB

We opened to the public, and Bereavement support sessions restarted in Mill One.

MAR

The Board of Trustees held their first meeting at Mabgate, another step in settling in.

APR

Staff and volunteers came together for a joint meeting in our main office to celebrate volunteers.

MAY

Death Cafe for carers at Mabgate to mark Dying Matters Week 2025.

JUN

A double celebration: a Volunteers Week Thank You event and a buzzing Carers Week Open Day.

JUL

We began exploring ways Carers Leeds can become more environmentally sustainable.

AUG

Our fresh new website went live and we took part in some local litter picking.

SEP

We proudly hosted the Baton of Hope Tour at our office and launched the Caring Kind Project.

Meet Beth, Head of Finance and Resources

Balancing the books while keeping Carers
Leeds running smoothly



Hello everyone!

I joined Carers Leeds in 2017 as Finance Officer, so some of you will have seen me around the office. My role at Carers Leeds has grown over the years and as well as managing the finances, I'm now also responsible, alongside Geoff, for the facilities side of things, which includes looking after our office.

The biggest project the facilities team have undertaken to date is the office move! Leaving the Headrow, our home of over 20 years, was a major undertaking.

As well as planning the move out of the Headrow, we had to find ourselves a new home! This involved months of searching, and viewing many and varied options (including one that came with its very own office dogs!) before settling on our new home here at Mabgate Mills. Downsizing from 4 storeys to one open plan office was no mean feat; but here we are!

On a day-to-day basis my involvement in the facilities side of things is ensuring we are compliant with all current legislation. This means maintaining good relations with the Facilities Manager here at Mabgate, sorting out snagging issues, and working with Geoff and our office cleaner Lisa, to ensure that Mill 6 is a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

Currently, I'm involved with our environment and sustainability working group, where my focus is on looking at introducing more environmentally friendly cleaning and washroom products, along with improved recycling for the office; so watch this space!

All this, along with ensuring Carers Leeds remains financially sustainable in these challenging times, means there is never a dull day!

Turn your caring experience into someone else's lifeline

Carer Awareness Volunteer



Call Us

Valerie, Volunteer Coordinator
07985 754 570

Website

carersleeds.org.uk/volunteering

Email

volunteering@carersleeds.org.uk



Carers Advice Line
0113 380 4300

The Wren Bakery:

♪ Neighbours, everybody needs good neighbours! ♪



Meet one of our new neighbours. The Wren Bakery works with women in Leeds who face multiple barriers every day. Experiences such as poverty, gender based violence, criminal records and poor mental health prevent them from participating in the benefits that well-being and employment can bring.

They exist to reach these women, and other hidden groups in our city for whom the challenges they face have a devastating impact on their lives and their ability to work.

"It's been the best thing that's ever happend to me in the life. I felt like I was just existing before, but now I feel like I'm living." A Wren Bakery trainee

The Wren Bakery is a warm and welcoming café where you're always greeted with a friendly smile. They serve freshly brewed coffee, alongside a tempting selection of tasty sandwiches and irresistible cakes. In fact, the cakes are so good that even some of our staff team often find it hard to resist a slice! It really is a sweet spot!



THE WREN BAKERY
WE ARE A
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORKING
WITH WOMEN
WHO HAVE
EXPERIENCED
MULTIPLE
DISADVANTAGE
WE PROVIDE
TRAINING IN BAKING
AND BARISTA SKILLS,
WORK EXPERIENCE
IN OUR CAFE
AND A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY TO
ENABLE WOMEN
TO BUILD CONFIDENCE,
TAKE STEPS
FORWARD AND
THRIVE

From the Headrow to Mabgate: A Journey into the Fast Lane

by Geoff Gibbs, IT & Facilities Coordinator



I'm Geoff, and I look after IT here at Carers Leeds. If our old Headrow office gave me grey hairs, it was mostly thanks to the internet connection!

Our old building on the Headrow served us faithfully, but let's be honest - it wasn't without its quirks. Draughty windows, uneven floors, and most of all, an internet connection that crawled along at the pace of a Sunday stroll. At best, the Headrow could only give us ADSL speeds - think of it as a tiny straw trying to deliver water for a whole office.

Fast forward to Mabgate, and the difference is like night and day. Here, we've moved into a fully managed space with modern infrastructure and, crucially, fibre-to-the-premises internet. That means speeds of up to 1000 Mbps and beyond! If ADSL was the office equivalent of sending a letter by carrier pigeon, this is like having your own supersonic jet plane.

With our new connection, we could theoretically download 7.5 million digitised novels in a single minute - more books than the British Library holds, and faster than you could decide which one to start reading.

But what does that actually mean for us? It means we can now expand our support for carers with reliable video calls and crystal-clear phone services over the internet. No more buffering, drop-outs, or "sorry, can you hear me now?" halfway through an important conversation. It also means we're ready for the future - whether that's new digital tools, smarter ways of working, or services we haven't even thought of yet.

For staff and volunteers, it translates to smoother working days and fewer IT headaches. For carers, it means we can connect more easily, more often, and in more meaningful ways. The move to Mabgate hasn't just given us a new building - it's given us a new engine to drive forward the way we work.

So, while we'll always remember the quirks of the Headrow, we're pretty happy swapping our old straw for a fibre-optic rocket. Buckle up - things are only going to get faster from here!

AUTUMN/WINTER EVENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

SAVE THE DATES!



ASK CLAIRE

- **Cancelled 6 Nov** - NEW date tbc
- Carers Leeds and via Zoom
- Ask Claire, CEO, a burning question, raise an issue or offer an idea

STAFF & VOLS MEETING

- Thursday 27 Nov 1pm-2:30pm
- Carers Leeds and via Zoom
- Volunteering theme and external speaker



END OF YEAR PARTY

- Monday 8 Dec 12pm-2:30pm
- Carers Leeds office
- Join us for food, fun and good company



Make a carer's role a little easier.

Digital Inclusion Befriender Volunteer



Valerie Banks

Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator/News Editor

Thank You

to our volunteer proofreaders Christine, and Ruth. And to our contributors Aidan Finney (office photos), April Lee, Beth Massey and Geoff Gibbs

If you have any ideas for content, please email Valerie, Volunteer Coordinator (valerie.banks@carersleeds.org.uk) or give her a call (0798 754 570)



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Carers Advice Line
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